

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the cooling holding unit has positioning portions for generally positioning the sterilized equipment to be held therein.

8. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 26, wherein the loading racks have positioning portions for generally positioning the sterilized equipment to be held thereby.

9. (Original) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 7, wherein the positioning portions are endoscope positioning portions for generally positioning endoscopes.

10. (Original) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 8, wherein the positioning portions are lowered portions corresponding to the shape of the sterilized equipment to be held thereby.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the ~~cooling holding unit~~ one or more first and second fans comprises pairs of fans for cooling the sterilized equipment to be held therein from above and below.

13. (Currently Amended) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim ~~[[11]]~~ 21, further comprising loading racks for loading the sterilized equipment, wherein portions of the loading racks facing the one or more first and second fans are formed of a mesh to facilitate passage of air.

14. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the cooling holding unit is capable of being opened and closed by means of a door.

15. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the drying holding unit is capable of being opened and closed by means of a door.

16. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the storage unit is capable of being opened and closed by means of a door.

17. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the storage unit is sectioned into storage areas according to the size of the sterilized equipment to be stored therein.

18. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 22, wherein the containers for storing the sterilized equipment comprise detachable cooling members having cooling means.

19. (Original) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 18, wherein the cooling members are lids for covering the containers.

20. (Original) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 18, wherein the containers comprise positioning members for generally positioning the sterilized equipment.

21. (Currently Amended) A steam sterilization storing device for sterilized medical equipment, the steam sterilization storing device comprising:

a cooling holding unit for holding and cooling the sterilized medical equipment which has been sterilized by hot steam, the cooling holding unit having one or more first fans

positioned to pull air from a first channel and direct the air over the sterilized medical equipment and one or more second fans arranged under the sterilized medical equipment for exhausting the air into a second channel ~~direct an airflow over a predetermined portion of the sterilized medical equipment;~~

a drying holding unit for holding and drying the sterilized medical equipment;
and

a storage unit for holding and storing the sterilized medical equipment.

22. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the cooling holding unit further comprises containers for storing the sterilized equipment.

23. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the drying holding unit further comprises containers for storing the sterilized equipment.

24. (Previously Presented) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the storage unit further comprises containers for storing the sterilized equipment.

25. (Original) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the cooling holding unit, drying holding unit, and storage unit, are formed in a common unit.

26. (Original) A steam sterilization storing device according to Claim 21, wherein the cooling holding unit comprises loading racks for loading the sterilized equipment.

27. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system comprising:

a high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization device for storing and

sterilizing equipment to be sterilized with hot steam;

a transporting device for holding and transporting the sterilized equipment sterilized in the high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization device; and

a cooling holding unit for holding and cooling sterilized equipment which has been sterilized by the high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization device.

28. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system according to Claim 27, wherein the transporting device is capable of holding and transporting containers storing the sterilized equipment.

29. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system according to Claim 27, further comprising a drying holding device for holding and drying the sterilized equipment.

30. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system according to Claim 27, further comprising a storage device for holding and storing the sterilized equipment.

31. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system according to Claim 27, wherein the transporting device comprises

a hanger member for holding the sterilized equipment; and

a clamp mechanism capable of securing the sterilized equipment against the hanger member by clamping the sterilized equipment in operation with the hanger member to hold the sterilized equipment with the hanger member.

32. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system according to Claim 28, wherein the transporting device comprises

a hanger member for holding the container; and

a clamp mechanism capable of securing the container against the hanger member by clamping the sterilized equipment in operation with the hanger member to hold

the container with the hanger member.

33. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization system according to Claim 27, further comprising containers for storing the sterilized equipment, wherein the containers comprise detachable cooling members having air-cooled fans.

34. (Withdrawn) A steam sterilization storing device comprising:

a container storing sterilized equipment following sterilization with hot steam;

and

a lid member, having small fans disposed at predetermined positions, which is attachable to the container.

35. (Currently Amended) A steam sterilization storing device for sterilized medical equipment, the steam sterilization storing device comprising:

a cooling holding unit that is arranged near a steam sterilization device for medical equipment for sterilizing medical equipment by hot steam for enabling repeated use of the medical equipment for medical procedures and that holds and cools the medical equipment sterilized by the steam sterilization device, the cooling holding unit having one or more first fans to pull air from a first channel and direct the air over the sterilized medical equipment and one or more second fans arranged under the sterilized medical equipment for exhausting the air into a second channel ~~positioned to direct an airflow over a predetermined portion of the sterilized medical equipment;~~

a drying holding unit for holding and drying the sterilized medical equipment;

and

a storage unit for holding and storing the sterilized medical equipment.